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ART. VI.—1. *On the Collection of Revenue.* By EDWARD ATKINSON. Boston: A. Williams & Co. 1867.

2. *Annual Report of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, Machinists, Millwrights, Smiths, and Pattern-Makers for 1866.* London.

DURING the past year the industry of the four great manufacturing countries of the world—the United States, England, France, and Belgium—has been in a state bordering on disorganization, owing to incessant strikes amongst the workmen. Trades which have hardly ever struck before, such as the hair-dressers and tailors, have struck now. Even that most ignorant and degraded portion of the European working class, the farm laborers of England, have been seized with the prevailing mania, and, after a slumber of five hundred years, have learnt to combine, and have had the audacity in some districts to ask for a rise in wages, and to refuse to work until they got it. What has made these strikes, too, the more alarming to capitalists is, that the organizations which direct them may now be said to pervade all the more highly civilized countries, and that the employer's old device of drawing labor from other places no longer avails him. The railroad and the telegraph have not simply enabled the workman to move about readily in search of employment, they have enabled him to hold his own against the master in the place in which he is. The English Trades' Unions—after having first brought the skilled labor of their own country under their control, and subjected it to a discipline which, considering by whom it has been devised and put in force, is perhaps the most remarkable social phenomenon of our day—have extended their ramifications to the Continent, and are now in alliance with similar organizations in France and Belgium, Italy and Switzerland, and have held one great “conference” at Geneva to cement it. The result is, that, when a strike occurs in any of these countries, not only is it no longer possible to put it down by importations of labor from the others, but assistance in money is freely rendered to the strikers by the members of the “International Association.” An example of this co-operation has been afforded in

the case of the London and Paris tailors, who have struck almost simultaneously, and render each other mutual aid.

Europe and America are too far apart, and the conditions of labor in them differ too widely, to render concerted action between European and American workmen possible; but the Trades' Unions have, in many of the great branches of industry here, been brought to as high a degree of efficiency as in Europe. Still we doubt whether that perfect discipline which pervades the English and Continental organizations can be found in America in any of the trades, for the simple reason that in England it is supported by intense class feeling. There the workingman on a strike is not simply a laborer who wants more wages: he is a member of a distinct order in society, engaged in a sort of legal war with the other orders, and he is bound to his fellows, not simply by community of material interest, but by sentiments of caste pride and fidelity. His employer is not simply a capitalist in whose profits he is seeking a larger share: he is the member of a hostile class, which the workman does not only not hope to enter, but which, both in France and England, it is considered mean or traitorous or cowardly for him to desire to enter. This feeling, we need hardly say, does not exist in America. The social line between the laborer and the capitalist is here very faintly drawn. Most successful employers of labor have begun by being laborers themselves; most laborers hope, and may reasonably hope, to become employers. Moreover, there are in the Northern States, outside the great cities, few barriers of habit, manners, or tradition between the artisan and those for whom he works, so that he does not consider himself the member of an "order." In fact, the idea of an "order" is either unknown or unfamiliar to him. Strikes, therefore, are in the United States more of matter of business, and less of matter of sentiment, than in Europe; and the abundance of land, and the multiplicity of openings in various other walks of life which every American finds before him, naturally render him less disposed to submit to very rigid rules of discipline, whether imposed by the master or by his fellows, than the European. In other words, the success of the strike is never a matter of such vital importance to the one as it is to the other. Should

the worst come to the worst, he has the prairies behind him,— a fact which, however valueless it may be in individual cases, diffuses through every workshop an independence of feeling, a confidence in the future, of which the European knows nothing. Besides this, the American working classes are in the enjoyment of political power, and have during the last four or five years shown a disposition to use it to further the ends which in Europe can only be attained through strikes ; and this, whether successful or not, naturally leads them to attach less importance to trade combinations.

In England the growing power of the Trades' Unions, now so great as to overshadow capital, and appear in the eyes of "good society" a political monster of portentous mien, has caused the issue of a Commission of Inquiry, which is sitting as we write, and taking evidence of leading members of these organizations, as to their character, aims, and mode of working. The testimony has only been published in fragments, and a series of attempts has been made by the London Times — and very unfair attempts the friends of the Trades' Unions consider them — to base on these fragments charges of tyranny, of violence, and of a desire to bring all capacities down to the same dead-level of reward,— in other words, of adopting the worst feature of French communism, and the one most likely to prove injurious to civilization. The first function of the Unions seems to be the placing of the workman on an equality with his master in the matter of contracts, so as to enable him to contract freely ; the second, the supply of information to the men in different localities as to the state of trade and the rate of wages in others, so as to aid them in deciding whether they would be justified in demanding a rise, or in accepting a fall, or in changing their place of abode ; the third, the relief of sick men, or superannuated men, or men on a strike ; and the fourth, the prescription and enforcement of rules as to the manner of performing work. This last is the only one to which real objection has been or can be taken. Amongst these rules is one which forbids piece-work, as tending to overwork and inferior work ; another which forbids a strong man or a man of extraordinary capacity from doing more than an average day's work, even for a proportionate increase

of wages, as tending to his being used as a "bell-horse," or standard to which men of inferior capacity would be compelled to work up; another which limits the number of apprentices; and several others, fixing the penalties to be incurred for any violation of the foregoing.

A very violent discussion has been raging in England over the morality of the rule which forbids the man of unusual powers from using them for his own personal advantage, either by working over hours, or doing more work than others in the same time. The Unions defend it, unjust as it seems on the surface, as simply the exaction, on behalf of a class, of the species of abnegation which is expected of every man on behalf of his family or at great crises of his country. We do not think it necessary to go into the matter here, because, as we shall try to show hereafter, these organizations are but temporary, and these rules are not likely to last longer than may be necessary to help the working class in its passage from one state of progress to another. Such criticisms of them by English economists as we have seen are evidently based on the idea that the Trades' Unions are likely to have a permanent place in the workingman's economical *régime*, and their rules to embody his social creed. But this we consider clearly a mistake. The Trades' Unions are but a levy for temporary service, and their rules are but the workingman's martial law. His true position in the body social secured, there can be hardly a doubt that the Unions will pass away, so that disquisitions on the abstract justice of their rules seem to us as much a waste of labor as discussions over the severity of the articles of war. All that can be said for them is, that they are, under present circumstances, necessary, and this is all that need be said. It may help to give some idea of the scale on which the operations of the Unions are conducted, to mention that the largest one, that of the engineers or machinists, numbers 33,600 members, with an annual increase of 2,000 or 3,000. Each member pays one shilling a week. The annual income in 1865 was \$434,425, and the reserve fund in bank \$700,000.

These associations, however, as well as the strikes which are going on all over the world under their auspices, derive their claims to notice rather from what they indicate than from

what they have actually accomplished. They indicate very clearly that we are entering upon the last stage in the process by which the working classes have been raised from the condition of slaves into that of freemen, and by which the last vestige of stigma will eventually be removed from the practice of "the base mechanic arts."

The law of modern social progress, as Professor Maine has pointed out, is the substitution, in nearly all relations of life, of contract for status, but there is no class of the community on which this law has acted more slowly than the working class. In archaic society everybody occupied a status provided for him by the law before he was born. He was either a slave or a Son under Power all or the greater portion of his life; the woman was always the ward of her male relatives. In primitive societies there were, no doubt, free laborers, who worked for their families; but as states grew, and industry spread, and riches accumulated, free laborers disappeared, until it is safe to say that, before the fall of the Roman Empire, nearly all the work of the Roman world was done by slaves, employed either by their owners or by persons to whom their owners hired them out, as negro slaves were so frequently hired out by owners at the South in our own day. Farm laborers, artificers, miners, domestic servants, actors, and even literary men were slaves. The free laborer had literally no place in Roman society. The conversion of the slave into the serf, which was the condition in which he was found at the dawn of modern history, was a great step in advance; but it is only within the present century that the last traces of serfdom have disappeared in Europe. In Russia, until within the last three years, some of the best mechanics were owned, as the Roman mechanics were, by persons who pocketed their wages, or forced them to compound for them; so that it may be said that, although the process begun more than a thousand years ago, it is only within the lifetime of the present generation that the substitution of contract for status has been completed. Nobody is now predestined by law to any calling or condition. When he has reached the years of discretion, he can determine what his pursuit shall be. The lives of all of us, of course within the limits prescribed by our circumstances and our capacity, are

regulated by contracts of our own making, and not by legal rules or traditions or customs.

Probably few, who have not paid very close attention to the social phenomena of our time, have noticed to what an extent this change is affecting many of the most important relations of modern life. Parents, for instance, retain, and must always retain, the legal right to regulate the conduct of their children, until the latter attain their majority. But in practice the exercise of this right is undergoing serious modifications. The advocates of implicit, blind obedience are becoming almost as rare as the advocates of corporal punishment. Children are not now expected, as they were expected fifty years ago, to do or not to do things simply because "they are told," or because they are children. Most plans of education are based on appeals to the understanding; and parents and teachers think it necessary, whenever it is possible, to give reasons for their orders or decisions, to point out the natural, and not simply the artificial, consequences of obedience or disobedience, and thus to bring the child's own will into play in the regulation of his conduct.

In like manner the institution of apprenticeship may almost be said to have disappeared from among us, at least in the form in which our ancestors were familiar with it. Half a century ago a lad, who wanted to learn a trade, was literally forced to become a bondsman for five or seven years. He was made a member of the master's family; his conduct was controlled by orders and rules from his rising to his lying down. His earnings belonged to his master, and the trades were not open to him until he had served out his time. He might be beaten or disciplined in any other way short of legal cruelty that seemed necessary to secure his obedience; and if he ran away he was advertised for, pursued, and brought back, with much the same formalities as a fugitive slave. In fact, advertisements offering rewards for the capture of runaway apprentices were not uncommon in the Northern newspapers sixty years since; and we know with what earnestness one set of interpreters of the Constitution of the United States have contended that the clause providing for the return of fugitives "held to service" applied to apprentices, and not to

slaves. But apprenticeship of this kind may now be said to be unknown. No lad will accept such a position, and few masters would like to have him work for them on any such terms. As a general rule, apprentices remain apprentices as long as they please ; and in practice the master's claim on their obedience is no stronger than on that of his journeymen. In many trades, too, apprentices cannot now be had on any terms. Young men learn trades when they choose and how they choose.

So also in the relations of husband and wife, the tendency of legislation in all modern states — of course it is in some more rapid and more perceptible than in others — is to reduce marriage to an instrument for the legitimization of children simply, leaving all the relations of husband and wife which are not necessary to this end to be regulated by individual will. The common law had a status ready for the wife, into which she passed the minute the ceremony was over, and which placed both her person and property under the absolute control of her husband. In most European countries the woman is deprived, by custom, to this day, of freedom in choosing her husband ; but in all of them there is every day a stronger and stronger movement towards her liberation from all legal incidents of matrimony which are not necessary to prove the paternity of her children and provide for their maintenance. One of the rights of woman, too, which is most strongly asserted in the prevailing agitation about her condition, and one which we have little doubt is rapidly obtaining recognition, is her right, even after marriage, to the control of her person in the matter of child-bearing.

We might multiply these illustrations indefinitely. Our proposition is perhaps, however, sufficiently clear, and may be summed up by saying that the tendency, both of legislation and of usage, in modern times, is to release all human beings from obligations imposed by imperative law, and to submit our social relations more and more to the dominion of contract simply.

The laborer passed out of the domain of status long ago. He has been in Western Europe, in theory, for several centuries, under the *régime* of contract ; but his circumstances

have been such that he has never been really emancipated. He has always been so poor, and so ignorant and helpless, that he has never been able to assume in practice the position which the political economists have persistently assigned to him. A contract, both in law and in political economy, is an agreement entered into by two perfectly free agents, with full knowledge of its nature, and under no compulsion either to refuse it or accept it. When a political economist talks of a thing being regulated by contract, this is the kind of contract he means. When he makes his deductions from his theory of contracts, he invariably assumes that the parties to the contract have really acted freely, under no influence except that of an intelligent self-interest. The laborer has, however, since his emancipation, never been able to be a party to any such contract as this. He has, as far back as we can trace his history, been drunken, improvident, ignorant of everything but his trade ; living in wretched dens, and working in foul shops, for what economists call "natural wages," that is, the wages necessary to keep him and his family alive ; breeding with a brute's indifference to the future of his offspring, and always pressing with so many mouths on his means of subsistence, that a week's idleness meant starvation for himself and his wife and children. The means of locomotion were scant and costly, so that, even if there was better work to be had by changing his place of abode, he could not seek it. But whether it was to be had or not he had no means of learning. We of this generation are so used to cheap postage, the telegraph, and the newspapers, that, although we marvel much over them in our speeches and poems, very few of us realize what the condition of society was when they did not exist, how slight was the intercourse between different localities, and how largely the news which passed through the country was composed of travellers' gossip, vague, scanty, and unreliable. For all practicable purposes a laborer's market, almost down to our own day, was the district in which he lived ; and it was so easy for employers to combine, and employers did combine so constantly, that in many callings dismissal by one carried with it exclusion from the service of all the others. As if, too, this tremendous power of a comparatively wealthy and intelligent

class over a poor and ignorant one was not sufficient, combinations of workmen against employers for any purpose were long prohibited by statute in England; and although this law has been modified, a workman's refusal to fulfil his contract is an offence still punishable criminally before a magistrate, while a master's can only be reached by a civil action for damages. In fact, it has been within a few weeks decided by the Queen's Bench, that a mere notice to an employer that, if he did not dismiss a non-Union man, the other workmen would strike, was "intimidation" under the statute.*

To talk of a man in this condition contracting with his employer was an abuse of language. The relation between the two was only contract in a legal sense; in a moral sense it had none of the incidents of a contract; and it is right to add, that, whatever illusions political economists may have cherished about it, the rest of the world has never cherished any whatever. To society at large, the laborer has never been a man who sold so much labor for so much money, and gave full value for what he got. He has been a kind of retainer or vassal, who was favored by being allowed to work, and from whom the employer was entitled to exact, not simply the service agreed upon, but deference and obedience with regard to the conduct of his whole life. As codes of minor morals, too, are usually framed by the employing class, the laborer

* "The first legislation which took place on the subject was in the fourteenth century, when attempts were made to check by statute the rise in wages which naturally occurred after the diminution of the population by the black death. The well-known statute of laborers limited the wages which different sorts of laborers were to receive, and made it penal in the men to demand more. This was followed by other statutes, one of which, in the reign of Elizabeth, empowered the county magistrates to fix the rate of wages in given trades from time to time as they thought proper, and this power was not legally abolished till the beginning of the present century. Another statute passed in the reign of Edward VI. forbade all 'confederacies and promises' amongst workmen to regulate wages or hours of work; and in the year 1800 a similar statute, of a more elaborate and stringent character, was passed in order to provide for the same object. There were besides a great number of statutes prohibiting strikes in particular trades. These enactments were known collectively as the Combination Laws, and they remained in force till the year 1825, causing, as may well be imagined, the utmost irritation and indignation amongst the workmen, and provoking them to enter into secret societies in defiance of the law, and to carry out their objects by every sort of violence to person, to property, and to the public peace." — *Pall Mall Gazette*.

was saddled with a variety of duties, which in no way flowed from the nature of the wares he offered for sale. The right of an employer, for instance, to the political support of his workmen, though not recognized on paper, and generally repudiated with indignation at public meetings, is nevertheless secretly held in Europe at least by nine tenths of the capitalist world; and even in America, the common saying about the folly of "quarrelling with one's bread and butter" is but the expression of a rough popular recognition of the doctrine that, when a man agrees to sell his labor, he agrees by implication to surrender his moral and social independence. Whether this theory of the laborer's position be a good or a bad one, we are not now discussing. All that we say is, that it is not the economist's theory, or, in other words, that the economist's theory of the relations of labor to capital are not supported by the facts of daily life. What I agree to do in order to escape from starvation, or to save my wife and children from starvation, or through ignorance of my ability to do anything else, I agree to do under compulsion, just as much as if I agreed to do it with a pistol at my head; and the terms I make under such circumstances are not by any means the measure of my rights, even "under the laws of trade."

When, therefore, political economists talk of wages as being fixed by the proportion which labor bears to capital at any given time and place, they presuppose a state of things which is purely ideal. The hypothesis on which this "law" rests is, that the capitalists go in a body to the market-place, where they are met by the laborers, and that there, if the amount of capital seeking profits is found to preponderate over the amount of labor seeking employment, the competition of the capitalists fixes the rate of wages; if, on the other hand, the amount of labor offered is out of proportion to the amount of capital available for its employment, the competition of the laborers fixes the rate. We know, however, that the process is never conducted with this freedom from disturbance; and a very large portion of the distrust of political economy felt by the working classes is due to the assumption of the economists that their processes are capable of as much accuracy as those of the science of mechanics. It is safe to say that, until within a

very few years, the rate of wages has, in no European country at least, been regulated in the manner here described. The most powerful regulator, and the only constant one, has been the laborer's ignorance and necessities. He always took what was offered him, and no more was offered him than was necessary to supply him with coarse food and clothing. A striking illustration of the defectiveness of the politico-economical theory on this point has just been afforded in England. A clergyman in Somersetshire found the farm laborers in his parish miserably paid, lodged, and fed, and usually ending their days in the workhouse, although they might have had nearly double wages, better treatment, and good houses, by moving away half a day's journey by railway. So he raised some money and sent some of them off. The light being thus let in, others have followed of their own accord, and the consequence has been that the remnant have had a considerable rise in their wages and great improvement in their treatment. Strikes also, organized by benevolent outsiders, have taken place amongst the same class in other counties, and with a similar result. But these laborers were too ignorant and too degraded to have made any move towards bettering their condition themselves; and it is fair to assert that, for centuries past, the rate of their wages has really been affected but little, if at all, by the demand for labor existing throughout England, or, in other words, with the proportion borne by English capital to English labor. It may, in short, be said of the laws of political economy, as is said of the municipal law, *vigilantibus non dormientibus subveniunt*.

Another illustration of the defectiveness of the basis on which political economists sometimes build their theory is afforded by the Irish land question. According to the school of social philosophers of which Mr. Lowe and the London Times may be considered fair mouthpieces, the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland ought to be regulated, as they are regulated in England, by the "law" of demand and supply. The farmer and the land-owner are, they say, free agents: let them make their contracts to suit themselves. Let the one try to give as little as possible, and the other to get as much as possible, and they will at least come to an understanding which will fix the rent at the proper level. Now the

fact of the matter is, that, until the drain on population brought about by the emigration to America, the choice of the great body of the peasantry in Ireland lay between renting a piece of land and becoming a day-laborer; and a day-laborer in Ireland was a man who worked in fine weather for a sum barely sufficient to supply him with potatoes, and who in wet weather, in one of the rainiest climates in the world, earned nothing at all. So that on his success in renting a farm on which he could raise his own substance it depended whether he would be sure of shelter and food all the year round, or pass it in a state of semi-starvation, keeping himself and his family alive partly by casual employment and partly by beggary. It must not be forgotten, too, that farmers with capital, such as now do most of the work of cultivation in England, are a class practically unknown in Ireland. When an Irish peasant, therefore, went to bargain with the landlord for a farm, he did not go as the political economists supposed him to go, as a man looking out for an investment, and who, if he did not like farming, could fall back on consols and wait: he went in the character of a drowning man, and the bargain he made was really a bargain with a boatman to whose gunwale he was clinging for the privilege of being hauled in. If the demands of the boatman were exorbitant, the other party might, it is true, let go his hold, and wait till other boats came up, and thus secure his safety at a price justified by the number of boats in the neighborhood, and the commercial value of his own life; but then drowning men neither act nor think scientifically.

It appears, then, that, although the emancipation of the laborer in modern times removed all legal bar to his selling his labor in the best market, or, in other words, selling it for such share in the products of labor and capital as the laws of political economy entitled him to, his education and social position have been such, that, in practice, the capitalists in each locality have had a monopoly of his labor. In other words, he has been legally free while socially bound. In books and in lectures he has, it is true, since the rise of political economy, been treated as the equal of the capitalist, and is always spoken of in scientific treatises as simply the vendor of a com-

modity in open market ; but in real life his position has been that of a servant with a fixed status.

Now the growth of education amongst the working classes, the increasing variety of employments, the increasing demand for labor created by the progress of discovery and invention, and the improvement in the diffusion of news and in the means of locomotion, have naturally opened their eyes to this wide divergence of the facts of their lives from the theory of political economy. They are very willing to admit that the relations of labor and capital ought to be what the economists say they are,—that the hiring of a laborer by a capitalist should simply mean the sale of a commodity in open market by one free agent to another. But then, they say, the bargain cannot and does not take place in this way. When a farmer brings his wheat to market, if he thinks the price offered too low, he carries the wheat back again to his barn, and waits patiently and comfortably for a rise. If the corn-dealer thinks the price asked by the farmer too high, he goes home, puts up his money, and waits also. After a few days or a few months, during which both parties have lived in perfect comfort, the demand of the public probably makes itself felt with sufficient emphasis to enable them to come together once more and agree upon a price. So also, when the capitalist goes into the market in quest of labor, if he finds that it costs more than he thinks it ought to cost, or more than he had calculated on paying, he withdraws, or waits, or invests in something else, or seeks labor in some other region ; the only inconvenience he suffers being a temporary, and to him probably trifling, loss of returns. When the workman goes into the market with his labor, on the other hand, if he finds wages are lower than he thinks they ought to be, he cannot wait in order to subject them to the test of capitalists' competition. He has not the means of remaining idle or seeking employment elsewhere. He may have some savings, but they are all that stand between himself and sickness, or between his family and his death, and he dares not touch them. His labor all the year round is barely sufficient to support himself and those dependent on him, and a month's or a week's idleness may plunge him in want or in debt. An attempt, on the part of an

individual laborer, to bring the capitalist to terms would simply result in a contemptuous dismissal. The laws of political economy no doubt work constantly, but they work slowly ; and if the laborer always waited passively for the promised result, he might never see it, or it might find him in the almshouse.

It has, therefore, been apparent to the working classes, that, even supposing the economists to state correctly the laws of their science, the workman could not live by them, unless he were by some means raised, in making his bargain, to the master's level, — unless he were enabled to treat with the capitalist on a footing of equality, as political economy supposed him to be, but as he was not. It was plain that to this level the individual workman could not raise himself in the present state of society. The only remedy was combination, the union of a body of workmen large enough, by mutual aid, to support each other in testing the market by waiting, and to subject the employer to something like the same inconvenience in waiting to which the men are subjected. It is only when these conditions are secured, that the politico-economical process for the ascertaining the true rate of wages begins. The mass of labor is then measured against the mass of capital. The laborers array themselves on one side, the capitalists on the other, and have a trial of endurance. Whichever can hold out the longest is decided to be in the right, or allowed to fix the price of labor. A strike, therefore, means simply the concerted organized abstention of the laborers in one trade and one place from work, with the view of ascertaining whether the price they have put on labor or that which the masters have put on it be the correct one, the laborers being supported out of a fund previously accumulated by themselves. They do, in fact, nothing more than all other dealers do every day, — withdraw their goods from the market when they think the prices offered lower than the state of trade warrants. But when a farmer stores his corn or a cattle-dealer leaves his oxen in the pasture for this reason, economists do not think of abusing him for it, or displaying before his eyes a calculation of the loss he has caused by not converting his wheat or his beef into human muscle, and thus increasing production and promoting human enjoyment. On the contrary, if they do not applaud his course,

they call attention with great satisfaction to the way in which his selfish regard for his own interests works for the general good.

Of course a strike is a wasteful and clumsy process ; but so is war, so is all speculation for a rise. The only excuse for it is, that it is the only means of reaching the desired result. If, when a scarcity is impending, people would only foresee it, and cut down their consumption voluntarily, instead of having economy forced on them by the hoarding of speculators, much labor and waste would be saved. If, when business has been too much expanded, and credit begins to get shaky, business men would voluntarily narrow their undertakings, instead of waiting for the banks to raise their discount and restrict their accommodation, the prudent and the careless or chimerical would not suffer together as they now do. If, in short, human nature were only what it ought to be, the saving in money would be incalculable, for two thirds of our time is really spent in guarding against the consequences of folly or stupidity. Strikes are sad sights, for the same reason that armies and courts of justice and jails are sad sights.

The more excellent way, and that to which we believe and trust we are now coming, for the decision of what the rate of wages ought to be, would be for the capitalist to take the laborer into his counting-room, and show him his books, reveal to him his rate of profit, and prove to him that he could not afford to give more for his labor than he was giving. But this would be a formal acceptance of a theory of the relations between labor and capital which, until very recently, the capitalist has always scouted. He has maintained, indeed, that the interests of labor and capital are identical, — a phrase which, though often used, and by some people regarded as something exceedingly valuable, has about as much practical importance as the statement that honesty is the best policy, or that true happiness comes from virtue. The interests of labor and capital are identical in the long run, and on a great scale ; but no capitalist feels them to be so, in his particular case, and on a particular day. He does not go into any business expecting to treat the laborer as a partner, and make him share in his prosperity by giving him a proportion of his profits. He ex

pects, on the contrary, to make a large portion of his profits by giving the laborer as little for his labor as possible, that is, by taking all the advantage he can, though perhaps not knowingly or designedly, of the laborer's ignorance or necessity.

It might be said, in the same way, that the interests of the cotton-grower and cotton-manufacturer are identical: so they are in the long run. It is the interest of the grower that there be plenty of manufacturers, and that they all get high prices for the finished article. It is the interest of the manufacturer that there be plenty of growers, and that there be large enough crops, and demand enough for the raw material, to encourage cultivation. But it is the interest of the manufacturer, nevertheless, to get his cotton on any particular week at the lowest possible price, without regard to the grower's necessities; and for this purpose he uses all the skill and knowledge and power of waiting he may possess. Nevertheless, both grower and the manufacturer are paid out of the same fund.

Of course, if the laborers worked for nothing for a year or two, it could be shown that by so doing they not only benefited capital, but benefited themselves, inasmuch as the greater the profits of capital, the more capital will there be hereafter for the employment of labor; and it might also be shown that capital, by bestowing all its profits for a while on labor, and thus stimulating the multiplication of laborers, prepared the way for cheap and abundant labor at some future period. But what is the use of speculations of this sort, except as an exercise for the wits? The real hard fact is, that the interests of capital and labor, in a particular year and in a particular place, are *not* identical. The capitalist makes all the profit he can out of labor, just as he does out of any other commodity; and the laborer gives as little labor as he can in return for his wages. For example, it was reported, and we believe with truth, that some of the most extensive manufactories in Rhode Island made over one hundred per cent profit during the years 1864 and 1865. These profits were enormous, so enormous that they were pretty sure not to last. When gains of this kind are to be had in any business, either production is so stimulated as to produce a glut, and cause a falling-off in prices; or so much capital is attracted into the business, that prices are lowered by

competition. But neither of these results comes very speedily. It takes a year or two to bring the one, often several years to bring the other. Men cannot and do not withdraw their capital from old channels, and put it into new ones, in a month. They wait and watch and deliberate before they go to work to build factories or put up machinery ; and in the mean time those who are already in the business enjoy a practical monopoly ; and yet the largeness of their profits makes no difference for the time being to the laborer. It *will* make a difference to him in the end, because, as capital is attracted to the business, the competition for labor will grow keen, and wages will rise ; but the Rhode Island mills might make one hundred per cent for two or three years, and nothing during that interval except a sudden diminution in the number of available laborers would compel the mill-owners to raise wages under the ordinary working of economic laws.

Now it is easy enough to tell the laborer that, the rate of wages being regulated by the proportion borne by the number of laborers to the quantity of capital actually engaged in production,—and the capital in this particular business having undergone no increase, and the number of laborers having undergone no decrease,—he is entitled to no rise in his wages, no matter what profits may be. In the days before he knew anything about combination he would have accepted this answer as sufficient, and gone on with his toil, while his employers every day received larger and larger dividends, bought gaudier coaches and faster horses, built themselves finer houses, wore finer silks, and drank costlier wine. He would have found himself powerless. Remonstrance would have brought dismissal, and dismissal would have brought starvation. But having learnt to combine, he refuses to accept the capitalist's exposition of the laws of his condition. He insists on establishing a relation between wages and profits, not in the long run, but at once. In vain you tell him the capitalist has to provide out of the gains of profitable seasons for the loss of unprofitable seasons, and for the hazards of all seasons. He will reply, that, as the capitalist takes care of himself, so must the laborer ; that the laborer's capital is his labor, and that he too must make hay while the sun shines, — must make provision in days when con-

sumption is brisk, and profits are high, and labor in demand, for days in which consumption will be dull, profits fail, and labor in no demand ; that the laborer, it is true, runs no risk which would be considered by a capitalist worth mention, but he risks his all every day he rises. His capacity of earning twenty dollars a week is a very small matter, but it is all he has in the world ; and in order to make it as valuable as possible, he creates, by combining with others, an artificial scarcity of the commodity in which he deals ; — or to put the matter in an odd, but perfectly true economical light, the laborers unite in dismissing their employer until the latter consents to divide with them a larger share of his gains.

Here the Trades' Unions step in, and perform a most important duty, that of deciding when it is proper to strike. In the earlier days of combination, when the workingmen were less intelligent than they are now, strikes of course were frequently made when striking was absolutely useless, and when the manufacturer could not afford any advance of wages. The result was enormous loss and vexation to both parties, and often terrible suffering to the laborer. But the managers of the Trades' Unions now make it their business, not only to watch and report the rates of wages in different localities, but to watch and report upon the state of trade. They follow the markets with keen, practised eyes, note the demand and supply, and are able to compare cost of production with obtainable prices with as much accuracy as the manufacturers themselves. The managers know with all but certainty what rate of profits employers in any branch of business are making, and therefore whether they can or cannot afford, without injury, to pay higher wages ; and it is only with permission from head-quarters that strikes are now made, as it is from head-quarters that the supplies of money come to support them. Moreover, — and this is a singular illustration of the conservative influence of responsibility, — the more powerful the Trades' Unions have become, and the larger the sum of money accumulated in their treasury, the smaller has been the number of strikes which have taken place under their auspices or by their direction. They are very careful not to exact of the capitalist more than his business can bear, or enough to

disgust him with it; but they do insist on his admitting the laborer at once to a share in his prosperity, instead of allowing the latter to be relegated, as he has been under the *régime* of the pure economists, to the distant period when, production having increased capital, and capital having been invested in the business in question, and the number of laborers not having changed, and the demand for labor having grown, wages should be duly raised.

We think nobody who considers the matter calmly and impartially can help wondering that economists should expect laborers to accept this statement of the law of wages, as a solace for the ills of their condition, one minute after they have discovered what combining can do for them. They have found in this a means — clumsy and imperfect, no doubt, but which, as we all see, is every year growing in efficiency — of securing for themselves in reality what political economists have assured them in theory, — an identity of interest with the capitalist, or, in other words, a participation in his profits as well as in his losses. At present the laborer does not share in his employer's prosperity unless it is long continued, while he suffers from his adversity at once. What he seeks is to share in both instantaneously, whenever they come, and whether they last longer or shorter. Of course the risks of capital are great, but so are its prizes. The success of his business to the capitalist means a fortune; to the laborer, his employer's success means simply the continuance of his daily wages. For any marked improvement in his own condition he cannot look. No matter how hard he may work, or with how much zeal for his employer's interests, he has nothing to hope from it, except the sweet consciousness of his own virtue, and the cold approval of the man he has benefited. Most capitalists look forward to retirement from trade after a few years of successful application to business; and even if this expectation be not fully justified, they enjoy throughout their career abundant opportunities for recreation, for travel, and for culture. The laborer, however, as at present situated, in nearly every country in the world, has little to look forward to except a life of constant toil; and even the soberest and most frugal and most highly paid is rarely able to save more than enough

to provide for himself in case of illness, or to secure a pittance to his family in case of his death. For books, for amusements, for any of the thousand and one distractions which sweeten the life of the class above him, nothing remains after he has clothed and fed himself and his family.

Now to say that this is part of the natural order of things, the result of the working of the laws of political economy, that it has been ordained that the laborer should receive barely enough to live on, though the man who employs him is making one hundred per cent per annum, and that he should always be paid in fixed wages, is to beg the question. This is the theory which nearly all sociologists have until now accepted, but the very object of the present agitation is to try its correctness.

How large a number of unchangeable things are only unchangeable because we have never seen anything different, has been pointed out and illustrated by philosophers over and over, and this is peculiarly true of social phenomena. Every day witnesses new discoveries in the sphere of moral duties and relations. We have seen how greatly the relations of master and servant, of parent and children, and of husband and wife, have been changed in the modern world by the growth of individualism. What we have now to see is whether we have reached the last stage of development in these relations, or whether further modifications are still possible. For several hundred years it has been accepted as one of the ultimate facts of political economy, that the laborer must be the servant, in all senses of the term, of the capitalist; but we maintain that that relation was as little determined by natural law as the relation of master and slave. What we have to see is, whether in the future he may not be the partner of the capitalist, and whether the will of the working classes, embodied in custom, may not assume the appearance and force of an economical law, and make, after a while, their participation in profits, and not daily or weekly wages, seem the natural mode of paying for labor.

When Co-operation is talked of as a remedy for the troubles between labor and capital, what is almost always meant is the co-operation of laborers with laborers, the capital being borrowed or contributed by them, and the work of superintend-

ence being done by some of their own number, elected for the purpose. There is little question that this is the form of organization to which labor is tending, and which it will ultimately assume; but it may be doubted whether the mass of laborers in any trade are yet in a sufficiently advanced state of culture—to say nothing of the material difficulties in their way—to render this possible as an immediate substitute for the present state of things. Large capitalists can always carry on business to greater advantage than small capitalists; and there is, we need hardly say, little probability that co-operative associations of workmen will, for a long time to come, be able to muster capital in large enough quantities to compete without disadvantage with such individual manufacturers as are able to secure steady labor. Moreover, the difficulty of obtaining in any association of workmen, possessing the amount of mental and moral discipline now common in that class, the requisite efficiency in general management, must for a long time to come prove serious. It has been overcome in several cases in France and England, but the number of these successes is still comparatively small. The attempts which have been made in this country have usually resulted in the conversion of the enterprise into an ordinary partnership composed of two or three individuals, and the withdrawal of their remaining members, or their falling back into the position of journeymen. Although, therefore, we look forward to seeing labor eventually organized in co-operative associations, and to seeing all the great accumulations of capital held by these associations,—and, what is more and better, to seeing a state of things in which the position of a mere hired laborer, dependent on daily wages, will be occupied only by a very small and insignificant class, and that class composed solely of the vicious and unusually unskilled or unstable,—we think the next stage in the progress of labor, and that to which the present agitation is likely to lead us before very long, will be the co-operation of laborers with capitalists, the association of the men with the master as partners, receiving in lieu of wages, or in addition to wages, a share in the profits, after the deduction of a fair, probably a high, interest on that capital, thus sharing his prosperity as well as his misfortune. This,

we venture to predict, will be the form of relation between labor and capital which will be witnessed in most manufacturing countries before very many years have passed. It has already been tried in some English factories with marked success ; and although the majority of masters will of course find it very hard to fall into it, inasmuch as it involves the sacrifice of some pride, of some cherished habits, and of some anticipations of profit, which, even if not always realized, and if becoming every year more difficult to realize, as anticipations have their value. That it is possible has been proved by one or two experiments in England, where it has saved at least one firm from the ruin which was impending over them from the incessant strikes of their workmen, while since its adoption all has gone on smoothly. In Chicago, also, the experiment is being tried as the result of the confusion brought about by the eight-hour law. The Northwestern Manufacturing Company of that city has effected an arrangement by which the capital and good-will of the concern are valued at a certain round sum ; on this the company reserves, after deducting taxes and insurance, ten per cent interest ; the men are then to receive ordinary wages for an ordinary day's labor, the amount to be fixed by the foremen of the several departments of the company, and, besides wages, half the profits of the concern to be distributed amongst them in proportion to their wages, the other half being appropriated by the company. If trade should fall off, the number of working hours, and the rate of wages also, are to be proportionately reduced ; but nobody is to be discharged for want of work, and if anybody leaves or is discharged for any other reason than want of work, and should be, at the time of his leaving, a stockholder in the company, he is bound to sell his stock to the company, and the company is bound to buy it at cost price and ten per cent per annum additional. The agreement is only made for one year, and of course it may be regarded as simply an experiment.

That it may prove successful, and that the example thus set may be imitated all over the country, every friend of humanity, and, let us add, every friend of the political system of the United States, — if the terms be not synonymous, — must

heartily desire. There is no question — and this eight-hour agitation, the Fenian agitation, and the negro confiscation agitation at the South prove it — that the mental and moral condition of the laboring classes is rapidly becoming in America what it is in Europe, the great social and political question of the day. Fifty years ago, the opportunity still presented itself to the people of the United States of trying an experiment then entirely novel, and the success of which would have been one of the greatest triumphs ever achieved in the field of social science, — the experiment of unlimited freedom of trade, of trusting, not in some things only, but in all things, to the sagacity, the foresight, the self-restraint and intelligence of the individual man. As everybody now knows who knows anything at all of the history of social science, amongst the thousand fallacies and superstitions by which the world was ridden in the Middle Ages was the fallacy that money was not only wealth, but the only real wealth; that whatever brought gold into a country enriched it, while nothing else did. From this flowed the delusion that all operations of trade which did not leave behind a large residuum in gold and silver were losing operations, and that therefore in every commercial transaction somebody must lose, that both parties could not be gainers, and that which was the gainer was to be ascertained when the account was closed, by seeing which could show most specie as the result. Spain acted on this theory in her management of her magnificent colonial empire in the New World, and flattered herself that she was laying the foundations of endless wealth, when her fleets of galleons unloaded their cargoes of precious metal on her quays. Other nations not having gold-bearing colonies acted on it in their regulations of foreign trade. The governments saw that men, when left to themselves, entered every day into transactions which did not leave behind a residuum of specie; that, in the ordinary course of trade, gold left the kingdom almost as much as it flowed into it; and that, in point of fact, the goods of foreigners seemed often to come in in greater volume and value than native goods went out, — and the difference they assumed had to be paid in gold. They therefore, perceiving the incompetence of the mass of men to manage their own business, got together knots of “statesmen”

in the different capitals of Europe ; — lawyers, to whom the merchant was a vagabond trespassing on the feudal lord's domain ; priests, to whom trade was but a snare set by the Devil for the unwary ; and soldiers, to whom the only use of craftsmen was to equip armies and decorate courts ; — and these drew up rules and ordinances informing the subjects what to sell and what to buy, what to manufacture and what not to manufacture, what might leave the kingdom and what might come into it ; and they did it with the most perfect simplicity and good faith, — the most perfect confidence in their own competence. They had no more doubt of the monarch's right to regulate trade, than of his right to regulate worship. The system of interference with commerce and manufactures was but the counterpart, perhaps we should rather say the complement, of the system by which the government prescribed what their subjects ought to believe in matters spiritual. It would have been absurd for a power which professed to know what church men ought to go to, and in what form of faith the pure truth was to be found, to profess inability to show men how to get rich. It was the most natural thing in the world — to come down almost to our own time for an illustration — that, when one minister of Louis XIV. was dragooning the Huguenots into the true Church, another should be teaching the faithful how to weave and spin and dye, what trades to follow and what to avoid. When a government can decide how a man ought to save his soul, of course it knows how he ought to make his fortune.

The doctrine that freedom of trade is a good thing, or, in other words, that the work of accumulating wealth is best done by individuals following their own instincts, seems a very simple one ; but it is, nevertheless, only eighty years old, and is yet only partially recognized. There is hardly one of the fallacies of the Middle Ages which has retained so strong a hold on men's minds as the idea that the government ought to act as director-general of trade and manufactures. One might have expected that it would never have succeeded in crossing the Atlantic, — that when a new community was founded here, with individual freedom as its very base, it would have been one of the first European fallacies to be laid aside. But

it nevertheless, unfortunately both for this nation and for all others, did come over, along with religious intolerance, and survived it. The men of the Revolution saw very clearly the advantages of freedom of trade within certain limits, and accordingly established it between the States, thus devoting to it a larger area and a greater variety of soil and climate than have elsewhere ever been won for it, and thus opening what has been unquestionably one of the greatest sources of the national prosperity. But with one of those failures of logic with which political history is filled, and which makes the growth of a science of history seem impossible, they did not see, and the mass of the American public does not see to this day, that what was good for the States between each other might be good for the States between them and foreigners. Everybody acknowledges that, when Massachusetts men trade freely with New York men, both are gainers, and that the establishment of custom-houses on the State line would be a great misfortune for both. But most people nevertheless, to this hour, imagine that, if Massachusetts men were allowed to trade freely with foreigners, the foreigner only would be the gainer, and the Massachusetts man would go on losing and getting into debt as long as the trade lasted, let the foreigner sell ever so cheaply. The dividing political line seems to have some obfuscating effect on the mind when it comes to deal with this sort of problem. In the case of Canada, the absurdity becomes more apparent, however, than in the case of Europe. If Canada were annexed to the United States to-morrow, free trade across the St. Lawrence would be established at once, and to everybody's satisfaction; and it would be universally accepted as self-evident that in the traffic which followed both the people of the new States and of the old States would profit. But draw the political line,—hoist the Stars and Stripes on one side and the Union Jack on the other,—and nothing will persuade most of us that, if free trade were permitted, all the profit would not fall to the Canadians and all the loss to the Americans; and yet the political line, of course, exists only in the mind, and has of itself no more real effect on the results of trade than the Milky Way.

The Democratic party, it is true, has been, during a portion

of its history, a free-trade party ; but less from a belief that through freedom of trade lay the straightest road to the object of all trade, — the making of money, — than from a dread of centralization and strong government. That free trade should not have been proclaimed by the Colonies from the first hour of their independence, and steadily adhered to ever since as part and parcel of the American system, and that protection should not have been repudiated along with royalty, oligarchy, religious establishments, passports, and all other parts of the paternal system of government, must ever be considered as one of the great misfortunes of our time. This country was, of all, the best adapted to the preaching and the practice of the doctrine. The climate, the soil, the situation, the genius and habits of the people favored it, and its adoption here would have had a force and influence which its adoption in any European country now does not and cannot have. Had England or any other leading European state, two centuries ago, thrown its ports open, the world would, no doubt, have made much more rapid advances both in moral and in material progress. We may be sure that feudal ideas would have died out earlier ; the soldier's trade would sooner have fallen in repute, and that of the merchant have sooner risen ; the means of intercourse between different countries would have improved more quickly, because intercourse, instead of being regarded as injurious, as it is under the protective system, would have been regarded as a blessing ; good feeling, too, among the nations of the earth would have been promoted, and the growth of standing armies, the great curse and scourge of modern civilization, have been prevented. But now, after five hundred years of meddling, the free-trade policy of England, as an example, produces comparatively little effect. People say, and not unnaturally, that she has only abandoned protection after it has done for her all she wanted it to do.

But it is easy enough to show that England has achieved her manufacturing supremacy, not in consequence of, but in spite of, the trammels on her industry. She has, in the first place, the great essential of manufacturing industry, — large beds of coal and iron lying side by side ; she has, in the next place, a population of extraordinary energy and indepen-

dence of character. She has a government which, with all its faults and all its affectation of superior economical wisdom, has been less meddlesome than any other in Europe, and which has paid an amount of respect to individual freedom which in all other parts of Europe has been unknown. Since the termination of the Wars of the Roses, at the close of the fifteenth century, she has been the theatre of only one war. France, Germany, and Italy, during the last three hundred years, have been desolated nearly a dozen times by hostile armies. During the whole of this period no Englishman had seen a foreign soldier in England, or an army in the field, except during the Revolution of 1642, and the brief raid of 1745. That the opening of the nineteenth century found England rich as well as free, compared with all Continental nations, was no wonder ; the wonder would have been if it had not.

But neither in England nor anywhere else was a full opportunity afforded of seeing what the freedom of the individual could accomplish in the art of growing rich. The first field ever offered on which the experiment could have been fairly tried was this continent. It was blessed with the greatest variety of soil and climate, with the finest ports and harbors, with the greatest extent of inland navigation, with the richest supplies of metals, of any country in the world, and had a population singularly daring, hardy, ingenious, and self-reliant, untrammelled by feudal traditions, and with the love of industry and honor of industry instilled into them with their mothers' milk. In fact this continent seemed made, and its population born, for the display, for the first time in the history of the world, of the free use of all the human faculties, for the submission of all the problems of life, social, moral, political, and economical, to the individual judgment. The opportunity was allowed to slip away ; the old European path was entered upon under the influence of the old mediæval motives ; — the belief that gold was the only wealth ; that in trading with the foreigner, unless you sold him more in specie value than he sold you, you lost by the transaction ; that, diversity of industry being necessary to sound progress, the diversity of individual taste, bent, and capacity could not be depended upon to produce it ; that, manufactures being necessary

to make the nation independent of foreigners in time of war, individual energy and sagacity could not be depended on to create them; that a hundred men assembled in Washington, chosen by the chances of a ballot, knew best how each citizen ought to invest his capital; and so on, through the whole weary round of mediæval fallacies.

The result was, that the policy of building up manufactures, that is, of forcing capital and industry into channels into which they did not naturally flow, by granting partial monopolies, or offering bounties, was deliberately resorted to, in close imitation of European models, until manufactures on a large scale were forced rapidly into existence, and society in most of the large towns of the East brought back to the European standard,—divided largely into two classes,—the one great capitalists, the other day-laborers, living from hand to mouth, thousands of them dependent for “their bread and butter,” as the phrase goes, upon the will of one person, and condemned to mechanical occupations in which they have no interest, and for wages which are little more than sufficient to support a somewhat cheerless and hopeless life. Agriculture has in this way been destroyed in some of the Eastern States, and, what is worse, so has commerce. Touching the effects of protection on New England, Mr. Atkinson says, in the admirable pamphlet the title of which stands at the head of this article:—

“I think Boston to-day affords a good illustration of the evils of protection. The conditions of soil, climate, and coast indicated maritime pursuits as the province of New England men; and she engaged in them chiefly until the South forced a protective tariff upon the country. As this destroyed commerce, New England developed textile manufactures before their time, and then, becoming converted to the doctrine of protection, continued to foster them by the same process. The result is, that a large amount of the capital, and a large amount of the business capacity of Boston, which should have been applied to railroads, steamships, and commerce, has gone into manufactures; consequently Boston commerce declines, and young men emigrate. Commerce would have employed the young men at home, or in voyages ending at home; but textile manufactures employ only a few treasurers, agents, or commission merchants, and a very large

force of operatives or laborers. There are too many young men for the number of places equal to their capacity, and they must migrate. I think the population of New England has not been improved by this forced establishment of textile manufactures."

The school of protectionists, of which Mr. Henry C. Carey is the chief, have been betrayed, by their servile swallowing of European ideas, into the assumption that it is necessarily a misfortune for a nation to be exclusively or in the main engaged in agricultural pursuits. This theory is based mainly on the comparisons which are to be found in most European works on social science between the town and country population,—a comparison which, as far as regards intelligence, alertness, acuteness, and receptivity, is undoubtedly unfavorable to the peasant. But then it is constantly forgotten that the European peasant is the product of one thousand years of feudalism, that he has never been provided with the means of education, that, except in Switzerland and Sweden, he has never shared in the government, or had to exercise his mind with politics, and that he has always been, and still is, overpowered by the sense of his own social inferiority. The result is, that the peasant or farmer is, in nearly all European countries, a synonyme for a lout or boor, a stupid, uninteresting, and servile animal, with foresight enough to sow, and greed enough to reap, but without any of the qualities which raise a nation much above the lowest state of civilization. The American farmer has grown up under conditions so widely different, and is himself so different, that generalizations about the industrial or social value of agriculture, based on European facts, are really of no value whatever to the American legislator. There has never existed, and does not now exist, a community so far advanced both politically and socially, so well adapted for progress of all kinds, presenting so sure a foundation for a government, and offering so fair a promise of lasting order and prosperity, as New England when it was almost wholly agricultural. We believe that there is not now, and will not be until the manufacturing industry has undergone a vast transformation,—a greater one than we look for in our time, or even in this age,—so good a school as a farming community, tolerably thickly settled, and supplied as no farming

community out of America has ever been with the means of education, for the cultivation of that stern, simple, enduring, self-reliant, self-respecting type of character, which must, after all, form the basis of any nation which seeks to do great things, or leave a shining mark in history. Town populations are quick in conception, and quick in action; but, as town populations now are, or are likely to be, for the support of a political system against the cankers of corruption and of delusion and the blandishments of oligarchy or despotism, and against disasters and dangers of all sorts, give us farmers who have been bred under it, and have learned to love it. In the three great revolutions which have perhaps done most for the preservation of political liberty in the modern world,—that of 1642 in England, and those of 1776 and 1860 in this country,—it is the agricultural population which has supplied the good cause with its stoutest, most enduring, and in fact, one might almost say, its only defenders; and the reason we take to be this,—that, whatever contrivances for the improvement of human character social or industrial science may still have in reserve, nothing has as yet been devised which gives the average man so strong a sense of his own dignity, so deep an interest in the welfare of his country, as the possession of land. It is essential to the success of a democratic government, not only that the people be educated and intelligent and equal before the law, but that the great body of individuals be so situated that they can in all things act freely on their own opinions, that they be under no restraint except that of public opinion, and that they be entirely exempt from the sense of dependence or of social inferiority, and from all but ordinary anxiety as to the future. Now no man whose bread and that of his children are dependent on the will of any other man, or who has no interest in his work except to please an employer, fulfils these conditions; a farmer of his own land does fulfil them. He is the only man, as society is at present constituted in almost all civilized countries, who can be said to be really master of himself. He is the only man to whom the smiles and frowns of every other man are of little consequence; and what is of more importance, his calling, unlike the artisan's, is one which requires the constant exer-

cise of all his faculties. He has a great variety of affairs to manage, calculations to make, and contingencies to provide for; in other words, he has his fortune completely in his own hands. His affairs, we admit, are not complicated, nor need his calculations be very abstruse, and his mind is apt to work slowly. The mechanic of the larger towns is pretty sure to have a readier wit and greater play of mind. But states are not made or saved either by ready wits or quickness of apprehension. They are built up and preserved by character, by devotion to great principles, by readiness to make great sacrifices, by independence, by courage, by the wide diffusion of the love of property and of order, by simplicity of manners, and by industry; and for these things, we repeat, we must in America, as manufacturing industry is now organized, look, not to great towns, but to the country. Freedom is a sober-suited goddess, and, as far as the world has yet gone, has shown a greater predilection for fields than for what are called, in the cant of our day, "the busy hives of industry." She has, it is true, revealed herself in great splendor in many of the most famous forums of the world, and has made many cities powerful and glorious; but her stay in streets has always been short. The only men who have succeeded in securing her favor and protection for a long line of descendants have been the farmers who for her sake held their ground at Morgarten and Granson, or charged behind Cromwell at Naseby.

Had individuals in America been left to their own devices in the matter of building up manufactures, it is possible the gross production of the country in many branches would have been less than it is now; but it is very certain that American society would have been in a healthier condition, and American industry based on a surer and more lasting foundation. An agricultural population, such as that of the Northern States sixty years ago, was sure not to confine itself to one field of enterprise exclusively. Enterprise and activity and restlessness and ingenuity, love of work and love of trying all kinds of work, were as marked features of the national character then as they are now. The American population could boast of much greater superiority to the European population than it can now.

There was sure, therefore, to have been a constant overflow from the farms of the most quick-witted, sharp-sighted, and enterprising men of the community for the creation of manufactures. They would have toiled, contrived, invented, copied, until they had brought into requisition and turned to account, one by one, all the resources of the country, — all its advantages over other countries in climate, soil, water-power, minerals, or mental or moral force; and whatever manufactures they built up would have been built up forever. They would have needed no hot-house legislation to save them. They would have flourished as naturally, and could have been counted on with as much certainty, as the wheat crop or the corn crop; and instead of being a constant source of uncertainty and anxiety and legislative corruption, as manufactures are now, they would have been one of the mainstays of our social and political system. Says Mr. Atkinson: "The most firmly established manufactures in the United States are those which have never been protected to any extent; — such as the various manufactures of wood; of boots and shoes; of heavy machinery, such as locomotives; and, above all, of agricultural implements and tools, of clothing, of sewing-machines, and so on, to the extent of the larger part of our home manufactures, some of which have grown up in spite of heavy duties on the raw materials of which they are composed." Moreover, — and this is what most concerns us in the present discussion, — they would have been built upon the American plan by men of education and intelligence and self-respect, accustomed to co-operation, to self-reliance, and to frugality, and the workmen would have compared even more favorably with our present manufacturing population than the Lowell operatives of thirty years ago with the Lowell operatives of to-day. American manufactures would then, in short, have been legitimate offshoots of American agriculture; would have grown, as it grew, in just and true relations to it; would have absorbed steadily and comfortably its surplus population; and the American ideas of man's capacity and value and needs would have reigned in the regulation of the new industry.

Our material progress, perhaps, would have been slower. When the rush of foreign immigrants began, in 1846, they

would not have found huge factories yawning for them in every direction, and great capitalists ready to enlist them in regiments to do their bidding and wait on their will. They would have been forced into betaking themselves to agriculture, the great source of the national wealth; and on farms they would have acquired the habits and learned the lessons which have made America a great nation, but which these newcomers, we fear, will be very long in learning in the streets of factory towns in which they now swarm, and in which no intelligent man can deny that they are rapidly reproducing the social diseases which are threatening the very life of more than one European state, and notably that worst of all diseases, the accumulation of large masses of capital in few hands, and the reduction of the rest of the population to servile dependence on its possessors. How much manufacturers make in a year, is but a secondary consideration for Americans. The great question for the American politician is, how are the results of production distributed. It is on the distribution of wealth, far more than on its increase, that the happiness and prosperity and liberty of states depend. Under the hiring system which now prevails, not only are large masses of the population kept in political and social dependence on a comparatively few individuals, but the faculties of workingmen are only partially brought into play; and thus the producing power of the country is seriously diminished. Of course, the ingenuity and industry and other good qualities of the laborer are in any Christian and civilized community more or less tried, no matter under what system he works. The reputation of doing good work, and the chance of promotion or increase of wages as a consequence of doing good work, are prizes which are offered in societies in which the laborer is free; but the influence of these prizes on the mass of men is, after all, only very feeble. There is really very little in the present industrial *régime* to stimulate the intelligence, excite the ambition, and sweeten the toil of ordinary mortals. The work is, after all, another man's work; the gain is to be his, and the honor of success is to be his too; and the natural result is, that the great object of the laborer, in nearly all the trades,—the matter which most occupies the thoughts of all but a few *âmes*

d'élite, as the French have so happily called them, who are to be found in every calling,—is getting to be every day more and more, not how to display most skill or diligence, but how to give least labor in return for fixed wages. This is to-day the great problem of the workingman's life.

Of the loss of productive power caused by this state of things little need be said. It can scarcely be over-estimated, although of course it would be impossible to form any estimate of it whatever. There is no such force in industry as the zeal, the eagerness, of workers. Its presence or absence often makes all the difference between national decline and prosperity, between national greatness and national weakness. The states most blessed in soil and station and numbers have been ruined for want of it; as, for instance, Spain, and Turkey, and the Southern States of the Union. Some of the smallest and least blessed by nature—as, for instance, Holland and New England—have achieved fame and power and wealth through the possession of it. The natural resources of the United States, and the natural energy of the people,—energy which is born with them, which the political institutions foster, and of which they are not likely ever to rid themselves,—are such that there is not the least probability that they will not be three hundred years hence, as they are now, a growing and thriving nation. But the great body of the people may be then, as they are now, even in the most favored country of the world, not poor in the European sense of the word, but so poor that their lives shall be over-laborious, their means of self-improvement small, their enjoyments and even their comforts scanty, and by far the greater part of their most elevating desires and aspirations unsatisfied. Mr. Atkinson obtained some statistics from Deputy-Commissioner Harland touching the number of persons in the United States paying income-tax, or, in other words, having an income of over six hundred dollars a year, in 1866; from which it appears that not over half a million out of a population of thirty-six millions have more than enough to support a family in the plainest way; of course, of these a large number must find it difficult to make ends meet at all. As long as America, although the richest country in the world, and that which presents fewest inequalities of fortune, has

this story to tell, it can hardly be said that it does not need to produce more rapidly, or in greater abundance. It cannot produce too rapidly, or in too great abundance, provided the result be well distributed; and we ought never to be content with our rate of production as long as the condition of the great body of the people is such that not only the comforts, but a fair share of the luxuries of life, of books, leisure, and means of culture, are beyond their reach. But this state of things neither this nor any other country will ever reach until the whole energies of the working population are enlisted in their work,—until, in short, it is made their own work, by their sharing in the profits of it.

The average man working for wages has only half his faculties brought into play. He has nothing to gain by extraordinary diligence,—very little to gain by extraordinary skill. His honesty even, or faithfulness, brings him no material reward. For foresight or calculation he has no need whatever, except for such small uses as provision for sickness and old age. In the causes, processes, contingencies, by which his fate is really determined, he takes absolutely no interest. Over the whole field of industry in which he is a laborer, he never raises his eyes. He works like a mole, in the darkness and underground, while his employer is playing above his head the game of speculation on which his children's bread depends. A reckless, extravagant, or incompetent employer of labor absolutely holds the comfort and subsistence of hundreds or thousands in his hands, and, under the present system, they can neither understand nor criticise his course. When he fails, or over-trades, they find themselves beggared or stinted, and that is all they know. Artillery horses do not stand more helplessly in the rear of their guns to be pelted by the pitiless fire of the enemy, than the working classes in the battle of industry behind the great manufacturing chiefs. If all goes well, they drag the cannon forward to fresh positions and fresh triumphs in a glorious gallop; if things go wrong, they leave their bones on the ground, but why and wherefore they cannot tell. A striking illustration of their ignorance of the things of all others which it most concerns them to understand — the causes of production and the relations of production to

wages — has just been afforded in the eight-hour agitation. A vast number even of the most intelligent joined in it, and carry it on to this hour, in the belief that an act of the legislature can secure a workingman the same amount of the results of labor in return for less labor.

This is a state of things which no thinking man can contemplate without concern. If the protectionist policy is persisted in, the process of assimilating American society to that of Europe must go on. The accumulation of capital in the hands of comparatively few individuals and corporations must continue and increase. Larger and larger masses of the population must every year be reduced to the condition of day-laborers, living from hand to mouth on fixed wages, catching — through dependence for their bread on the good-will of employers, and through long subjection to factory discipline and long exemption from the higher and more ennobling anxieties of life — the servile tone and servile way of thinking, and, what is worse than all, learning to consider themselves a class apart, with rights and interests opposed to or different from those of the rest of the community. This last-named tendency has already begun to influence political contests, and, if we are not greatly mistaken, its worst results are yet to be seen. To enumerate at length the dangers to republican government which may spring from this state of things would need an article to itself; but we believe that there are very few readers of the Review who cannot readily picture them without aid from us.

There is, of course, no use in lamentation over the mistakes of the past, unless it helps us in regulating our policy in the future. We cannot go back and undo the work of the last sixty years. We cannot restore American society as it was at the beginning of the century, and cannot be sure that it would be desirable to do so even if we could. But we can avoid perseverance in error; we can recognize in legislation the cardinal idea of the American system, that the great end of political institutions, the great end of all laws and ordinances, is not the accumulation of wealth simply, or the manufacture of cotton or of iron, but the development of the individual man; and that the individual man is best developed by being supplied with the means of education, and secured in the

enjoyment of the fruits of his industry, and then let alone. Granting all that can be said in favor of diversity of industry, or independence of foreigners, we still maintain that there can be no useful diversity of industry which is not produced simply by diversity of individual taste, capacity, and ambition, left to work freely; and no real independence of foreigners which is not the result simply and solely of native superiority either in energy or industry or inventiveness or in natural advantages.

This, however, is not enough, although it is all that can be done by legislation. We need besides this, to deliver us from the dangers to which the traditions of feudalism and the forcing system have exposed us, the elevation of the working classes from the condition of hired laborers, toiling without other aim than to do as little as possible, and without other reward than fixed weekly wages, into that of partners dependent for the amount of their compensation on the amount of their *immediate* production, and stimulated by self-interest into the utmost diligence and carefulness, and into the study and comprehension of the whole industrial process,—of the laws which regulate the relations of labor and capital, production and distribution,—or, in other words, into playing in society the part of men, and not of machines. This cannot be done by legislation. It must be left to the workingmen and their employers. If capitalists are wise, they will do all they can to hasten it; and if the workingmen are wise, they will give up following after politicians, and meet the capitalists in a spirit of frankness and considerateness and independence. But we trust that in their own interest, as in that of the country, they will never cease agitating and combining until the *régime* of wages, or, as we might perhaps better call it, the servile *régime*, has passed away as completely as slavery or serfdom, and until in no free country shall any men be found in the condition of mere hirelings, except those whom vice or misconduct or ignorance or want of self-restraint renders unfit for association with the honest and intelligent and self-denying.